

Portsmouth, RI

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Town Council Presentation – July 10, 2023



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Agenda



- Project Overview: Process
- Highlights: Final Master Plan
- Summary Findings: Goals, Strategies, and Actions



Overarching Goals

- Identify recently completed projects and projects in design/development by community stakeholders and various non-profits.
- Conduct an inventory and analysis of existing recreation programs and facility assets operated, managed, and maintained by the Town.
- Evaluate the conditions of existing recreational resources regarding geographic distribution, equitable access, and user group concerns.
- Determine if future demands will be met based on the existing inventory, programs, projected demographics, future recreation trends, and identified needs of the community.
- Identify site-specific recommendations for policy development, upgrading facilities, and feasibility of new facilities to meet the recreational needs of the community.



Process

Information and Analysis

DATA COLLECTION

Plans/Studies/Reports
Site Inventory
Program Comparisons

DEMOGRAPHICS/TRENDS

Census Data
National Trends

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Mapping/Metrics
Environmental Analyses

Outreach and Engagement

PORTSMOUTH THIS WEEK

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

(2) ONLINE SURVEYS

Athletic Facility Use
General Public/Community

(2) PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Community Input
Master Planning Input

Needs Assessment

SITE ANALYSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

Final Master Plan

DRAFT/FINAL MASTER PLAN



Information and Analysis: Data Collection

Existing Plans, Studies, and Reports:

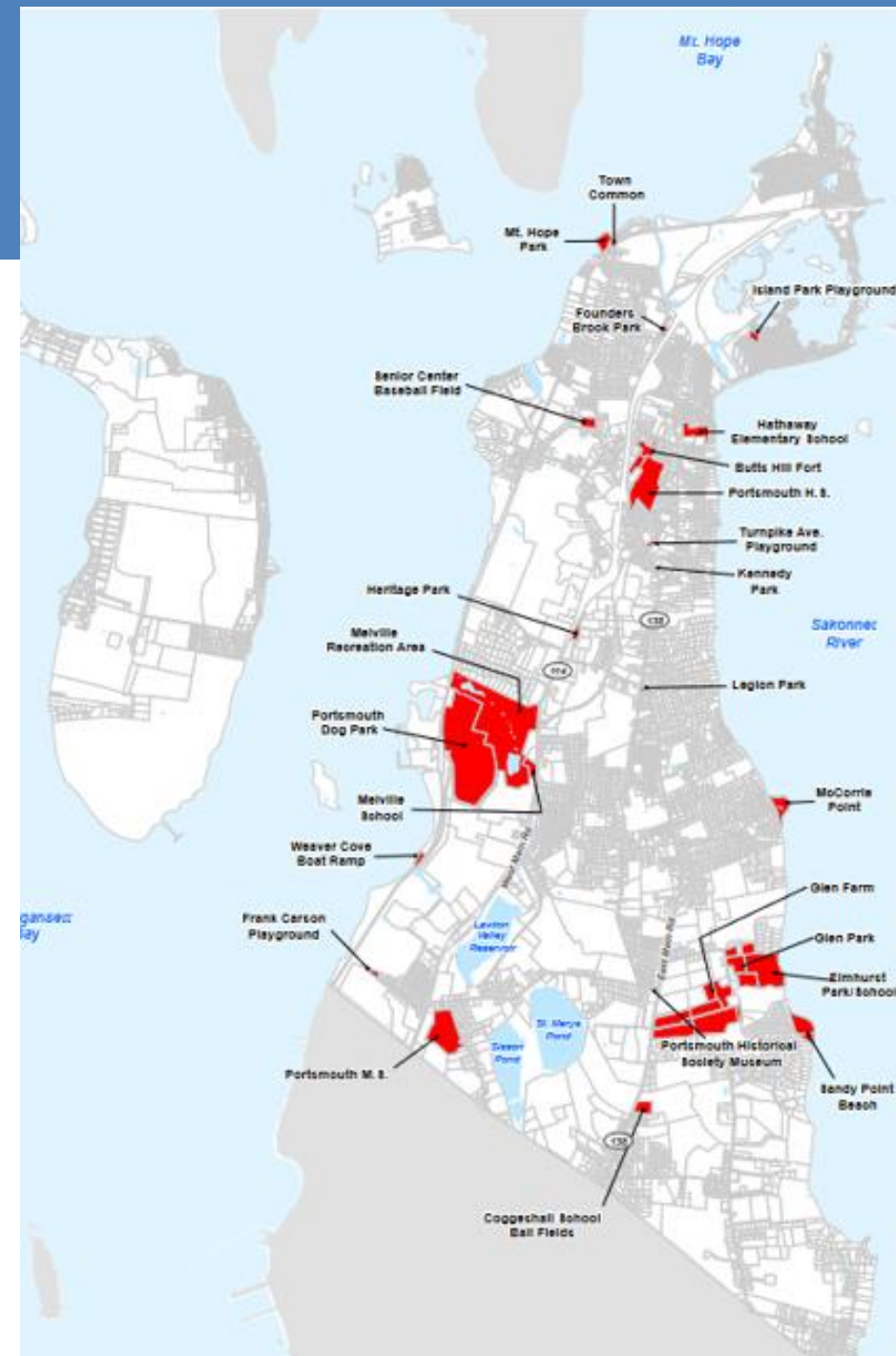
- 2019 Facility Condition Assessment
- Portsmouth Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (November 2019)
- Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan: Recreation Element (progress draft)
- Mt. Hope Park Master Plan (November 2017)
- 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
- 2019 – 2024 Statewide Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan



Information and Analysis: Data Collection

Site Inventory:

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Historic Parks
- Playgrounds
- Special Use Areas
(Freshwater/Saltwater/Beach/General)



Information and Analysis: Trends

National Trends – Outdoor Facilities

Potential Growth:

- Playground: 3
- Dog Park: 1
- Softball Field (Adult): 3
- Baseball Field (Adult): 2
- Swimming Pool: 2
- Community Garden: 2
- Soccer Field (Adult): 2
- Skate Park: 2
- Ice Rink: 2
- Pickleball Court: 5

Type of Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility	Number of Facilities				
	Population of Jurisdiction	Baseline	2022 Inventory	Population 2021: 17,754 ¹	Population 2030: 17,779 ²	
	Less than 20,000	Less than 20,000	Portsmouth 2022 Existing	Portsmouth 2022 Additional Needs	Portsmouth 2030 Needs	Portsmouth 2030 Additional Needs
Playgrounds	1,986	9	6	3	9	3
Basketball Courts	3,750	5	13	0	5	0
Diamond Fields: Baseball - Youth	3,107	6	10	0	6	0
Tennis Courts	2,723	7	8	0	7	0
Rectangular Fields: Multi-Purpose	4,362	4	5	0	4	0
Dog Parks	11,100	2	1	1	2	1
Diamond Fields: Softball Fields - Adult	5,667	3	0	3	3	3
Diamond Fields: Softball - Youth	5,339	3	3	0	3	0
Diamond Fields: Baseball - Adult	7,954	2	0	2	2	2
Swimming Pools	8,637	2	0	2	2	2
Community Gardens	8,773	2	0	2	2	2
Rectangular Fields; Soccer Field - Youth	3,504	5	15	0	5	0
Rectangular Field: Soccer Field - Adult	8,017	2	0	2	2	2
Skate Parks	11,100	2	0	2	2	2
Rectangular Fields: Football Field ³	8,004	2	1	0	2	1
Regulation 18-Hole Golf Courses	9,183	2	0	2	2	2
Driving Range Station	5,055	4	0	4	4	4
Multi-Purpose Synthetic Fields	12,962	1	1	0	1	1
Ice Rinks	7,997	2	0	2	2	2
Pickleball Courts	3,446	5	0	5	5	5

Information and Analysis: Trends

National Trends – Outdoor Facilities

National Prevalence:

- How many communities similar in size to Portsmouth reported having these types of facilities?
- Diversity of facility types are in line with national trends.

Type of Facility	Prevalence in Communities <20,000
Playgrounds	96%
Basketball Courts	86%
Diamond Fields: Baseball - Youth	78%
Tennis Courts	78%
Rectangular Fields: Multi-Purpose	60%
Dog Parks	44%
Diamond Fields: Softball Fields - Adult	51%
Diamond Fields: Softball - Youth	62%
Diamond Fields: Baseball - Adult	45%
Swimming Pools	53%
Community Gardens	40%
Rectangular Fields; Soccer Field - Youth	52%
Rectangular Field: Soccer Field - Adult	35%
Skate Parks	39%
Rectangular Fields: Football Field ³	26%
Regulation 18-Hole Golf Courses	29%
Driving Range Station	9%
Multi-Purpose Synthetic Fields	3%
Ice Rinks	21%
Pickleball Courts	18%

Information and Analysis: Trends

National Trends – Indoor Facilities

Potential Growth:

- Community Center: 2
- Senior Center: 1
- Performance Amphitheater: 1
- Nature Center: 2
- Aquatics Center: 2
- Stadium: 2
- Teen Center: 1
- Indoor Ice Rink: 2
- Arena: 3

Type of Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility	Number of Facilities				
	Population of Jurisdiction	Baseline	2022 Inventory	Population 2021: 17,754 ²	Population 2030: 17,779 ³	
	Less than 20,000	Less than 20,000	Portsmouth 2022 Existing	Portsmouth 2022 Additional Needs	Portsmouth 2030 Needs	Portsmouth 2030 Additional Needs
Recreation Centers (including gyms)	9,126	2	2	0	2	0
Community Centers	8,504	2	0	2	2	2
Senior Center	12,935	1	0	1	1	1
Performance Amphitheaters ¹	9,291	2	1	1	2	1
Nature Centers	11,821	2	0	2	2	2
Aquatics Center	11,375	2	0	2	2	2
Stadium	9,126	2	0	2	2	2
Teen Centers	14,426	1	0	1	1	1
Indoor Ice Rink	8,002	2	0	2	2	2
Arenas	6,137	3	0	3	3	3

Information and Analysis: Trends

National Trends – Indoor Facilities

National Prevalence:

- How many communities similar in size to Portsmouth reported having these types of facilities?
- Diversity of facility types are limited in Portsmouth.

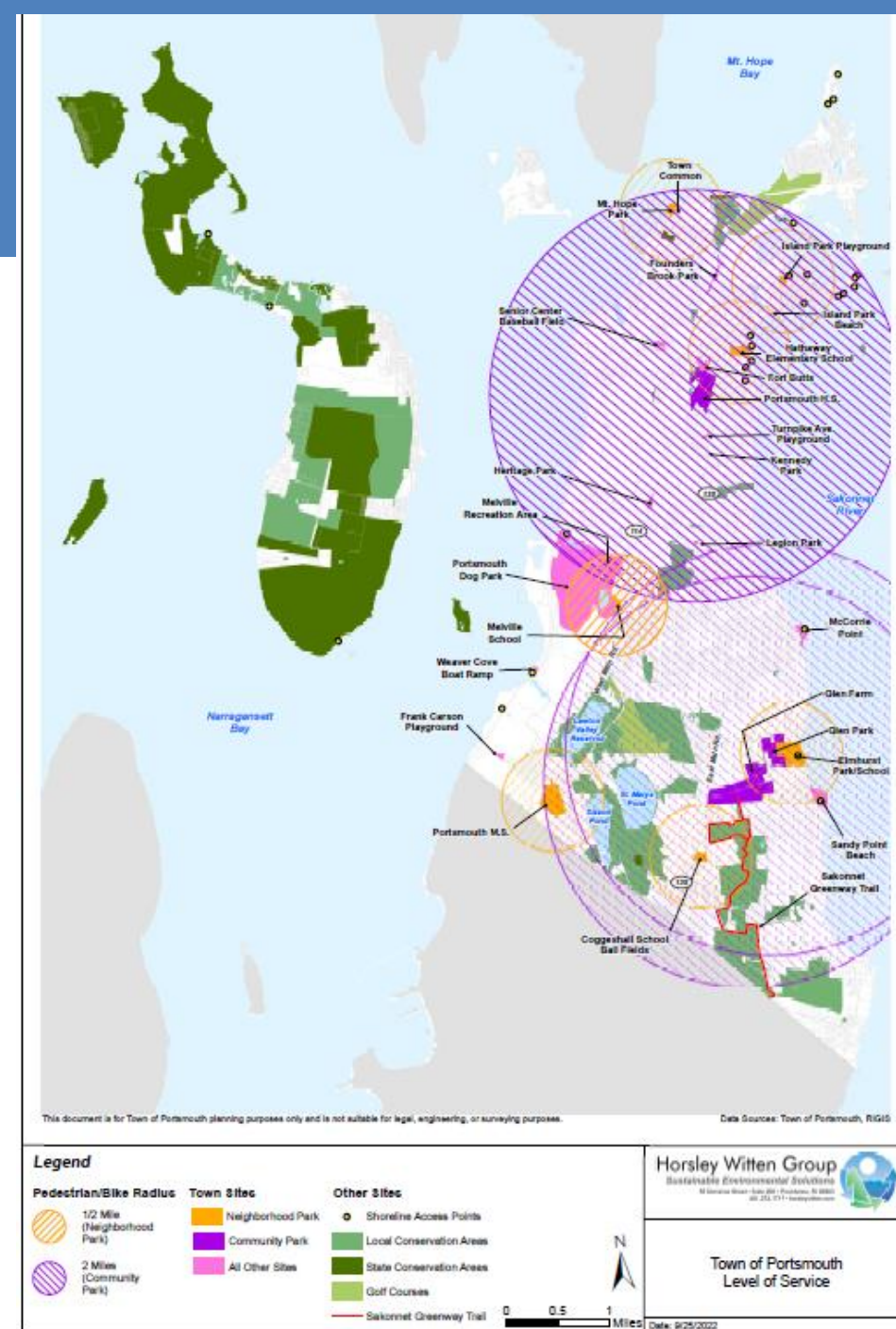
Type of Facility	Prevalence in Communities <20,000
Recreation Centers (including gyms)	49%
Community Centers	51%
Senior Center	25%
Performance Amphitheaters ¹	16%
Nature Centers	10%
Aquatics Center	15%
Stadium	11%
Teen Centers	8%
Indoor Ice Rink	6%
Arenas	4%



Information and Analysis: Level of Service Analyses

NRPA Parkland Classification:

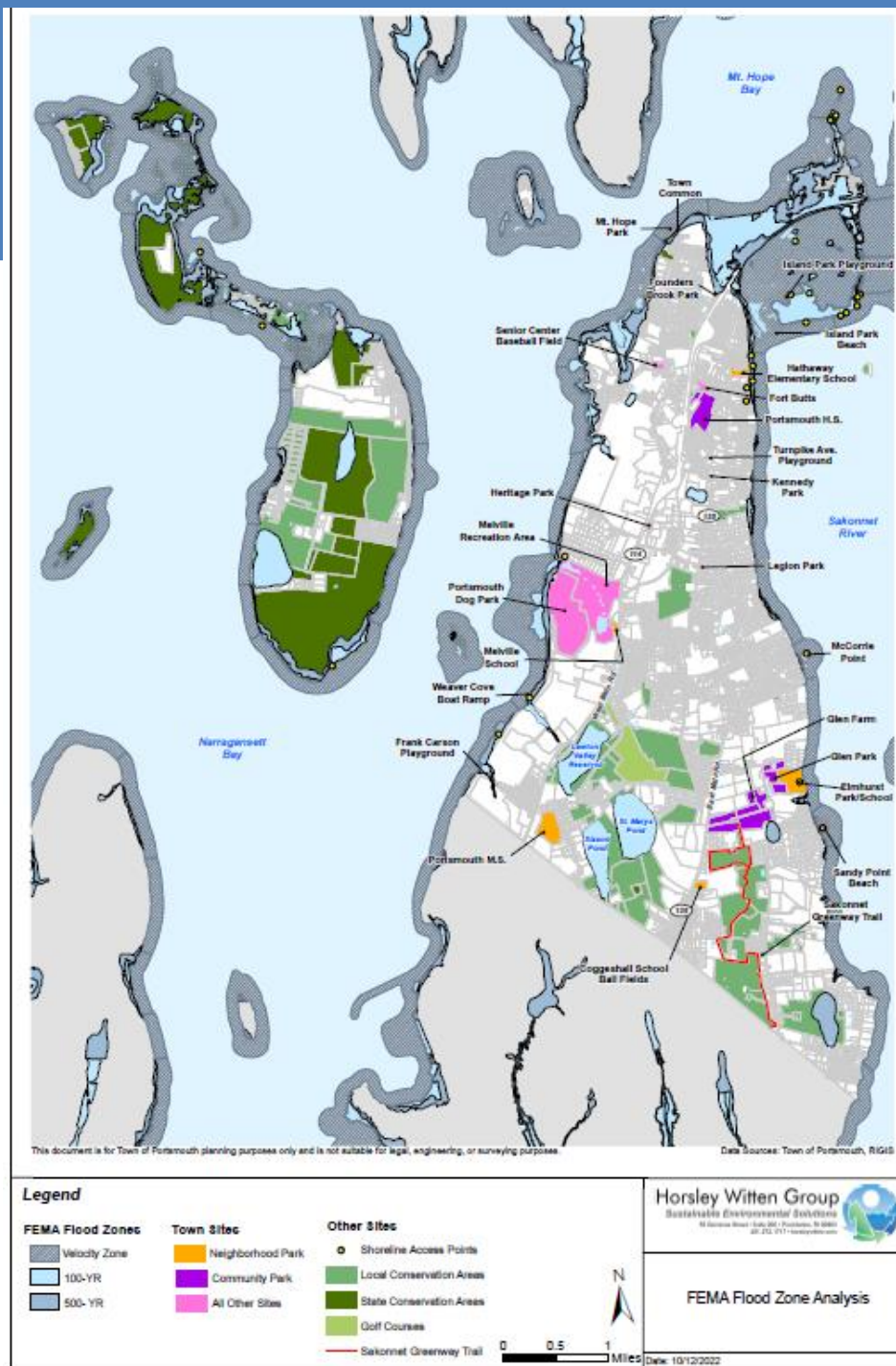
- Portsmouth is equitably served by recreational amenities/facilities
- A planning tool to inform future improvements/investments



Information and Analysis: Level of Service Analyses

FEMA Flood Zone Analysis:

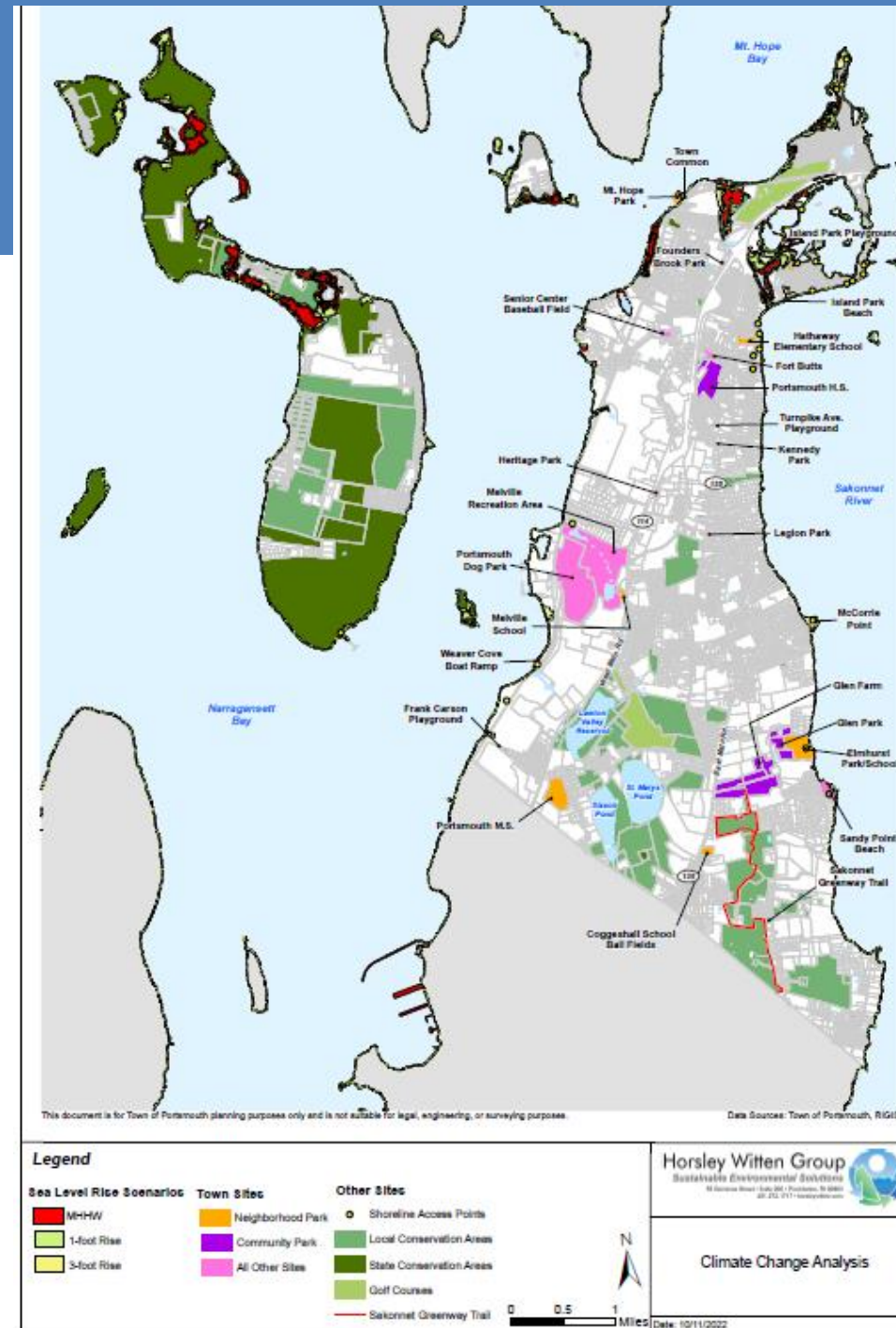
- Velocity Zone
 - Sandy Point Beach
 - Mc Corrie Point
 - Island Park Playground
 - Mt Hope Park
 - Elmhurst Park
 - Weaver Cove Boat Ramp
- 100-Year Flood Zone
 - Frank Carson Playground



Information and Analysis: Level of Service Analyses

Climate Change Analysis:

- 1-foot Rise (2030)
 - Coastal sites impacted
- 3-foot Rise (2050)
 - Sandy Point Beach
 - Mc Corrie Point
 - Elmhurst Park
 - Island Park Playground
 - Mt Hope Park
 - Weaver Cove Boat Ramp



Outreach and Engagement: Portsmouth This Week



<https://youtu.be/SnlwE4yPDxc>



Outreach and Engagement: Stakeholder Interviews

- Portsmouth DPW
- Portsmouth Recreation Department
- Melville Park Committee
- Portsmouth Dog Park Committee
- Portsmouth School District
- Portsmouth Youth Soccer Association
- 4 Hearts Foundation (Turnpike Avenue Playground)
- Howell House
- Clemens Equine



Outreach and Engagement: Community Survey

Survey Response Common Themes

- 58% visit parks/recreational areas several times per week
- 1/3 of respondents are satisfied/very satisfied with parks/recreational facilities
- 45% live within a half-mile of a park/recreational facility
- 56% drive to get to a park/recreational facility
- Many are concerned about the limited number of bike trails/paths, connectivity to sites, and limited ADA-resources available
- Top 3 most important actions Town should pursue in the next 5 years:
 - Develop Community/Recreation Center
 - Improve maintenance at existing sites
 - Acquire/Preserve more open space



Outreach and Engagement: Athletic Facility Users Survey

Survey Response Common Themes

- As participation increases, more competition for fields
- Fields are not equitably distributed throughout the community
- Practices/games conflict with other leagues/sports
- Limited space for warming up/concurrent game play
- Grades/slopes of fields create advantages/disadvantages to game play
- Field Equipment/appurtenances are old and need to be replaced
- Infields flood due to poor grading/drainage
- Rental fees/rates increasingly unaffordable
- Onsite storage is an issue



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #1 – April 2022

What is working well?

- Portsmouth Dog Park
- Land Trust/Melville Trails
- Volunteer engagement
- Facility upgrades
- Beaches
- Summer camp

What is working but could be improved?

- Parking
- Walking/Biking paths (safety)
- Awareness of/information on facilities/amenities
- Programming (families, year-round/indoors)
- Maintenance
- Connectivity

What is missing?

- Pickleball
- Indoor Community/Recreation Center
- Coordination with school district facilities
- Aquatics Center
- Connectivity



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

**Information/
Communication/Policies**

**Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship**

**Connectivity/Mobility/
Access**

Programming

Amenities

Facilities

**Maintenance/Stewardship/
Personnel**



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

**Information/
Communication/Policies**

Overarching Goal:

Increase communications and formalize policies

- Majority in support of recommendations as presented
- No additional feedback received from the public



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Programming

Overarching Goal:

Expand program offerings

What should the Town work on first?

- Adult/Senior programming
- More community events
- Winter activities/Family offerings
- Toddler/Pre-K sports/recreation programming
- STEM Learning
- Youth/HS/College programming
- Art programming



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Programming

Overarching Goal:

Expand program offerings

What is missing or and/or could be improved?

- Improve information/communications
- Programs/Activities for 50/60-year-olds
- Better coordination with YMCA
- Expand programming to year-round
- Integrate non-Town events
- Programs at Senior Center



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Amenities

Overarching Goal:

Enhance and upgrade amenities

What should the Town work on first?

- Parking
- Restrooms
- Alternative use/play areas
- Information/Interpretive signage
- Shelter from weather/sun
- Storage for user groups
- Concessions
- Seating



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Facilities
(Outdoor)

Overarching Goal:

Enhance existing and develop new outdoor facilities

What should the Town work on first?

- Playgrounds
- Basketball Courts
- Water playground/Splash pad
- Bike Trails/Paths
- Pickleball courts
- Swimming pool
- Adult baseball field
- Tennis Courts
- Community Gardens
- Ice rink



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Facilities
(Outdoor)

Overarching Goal:

Enhance existing and develop new outdoor facilities

What is missing and/or be improved?

- Outdoor ice-skating rink that can be converted to a splash pad in the summer
- Connectivity...for Portsmouth and Middletown residents.
- Pedestrian/bicycle access



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Facilities
(Indoor)

Overarching Goal:

Enhance existing and develop new indoor facilities

What should the Town work on first?

- Community Center
- Basketball courts
- Senior center
- Aquatics center
- Nature center



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Facilities
(Indoor)

Overarching Goal:

Enhance existing and develop new indoor facilities

What is missing and/or could be improved?

- School facilities need to be open to supervised public use



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Maintenance/Stewardship/
Personnel

Overarching Goal:

Maintain existing facilities and identify partnerships for stewardship

- Majority in support of recommendations as presented



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

Preservation/Growth,
Stewardship

Maintenance/Stewardship/
Personnel

Overarching Goal:

Maintain existing facilities and identify partnerships for stewardship

What is missing and/or could be improved?

- Train sports personnel in multi-sports to save money
- Train all existing personnel in best practices for safety/standards
- Enlist all sports leagues to be trained in proper maintenance
- Hire personnel/contractors to handle invasive species
- Hire more personnel in general



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

**Connectivity/Mobility/
Access**

Overarching Goal:

Enhance connectivity, mobility, and access

- Majority in support of recommendations as presented



Outreach and Engagement: Public Workshops

Public Workshop #2 – December 2022

**Connectivity/Mobility/
Access**

Overarching Goal:

Enhance connectivity, mobility, and access

What is missing and/or could be improved?

- Consider RIPTA or other transit service for youth and elderly
- Parking/circulation from Old Glen Farm Road so biking can be enhanced
- Walking paths/trails especially at Gardner-Seveney



Needs Assessment: Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Information/ Communication/Policies

Goal 1: Increase information/communications planning and formalize policies/protocols.

- Strategy 1.1 Expand and periodically update the Parks and Recreation Department's webpage to increase the public's access to information.
- Strategy 1.2 Formalize policies and protocols for facility use.
- Strategy 1.3 Ensure equitable recreation experiences for a diverse community.



Needs Assessment: Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Preservation/Growth, Stewardship

Goal 2: Maintain/enhance existing facilities, expand program offerings, and develop new indoor and outdoor facilities.

- Strategy 2.1 Develop and implement a Maintenance Management Plan to ensure that funds are directed/invested in tasks that support the ongoing maintenance of existing sites and proactively plans for new sites in development.
- Strategy 2.2 Pursue stewardship opportunities/partnerships of parks and recreation facilities to enhance maintenance efforts and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility throughout the community
- Strategy 2.3 Establish an evaluative system for current programs and the addition of future programs.



Needs Assessment: Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Preservation/Growth, Stewardship

Goal 2: Maintain/enhance existing facilities, expand program offerings, and develop new indoor and outdoor facilities.

- Strategy 2.4 Enhance/upgrade and/or develop new amenities at existing sites to improve the user experience.
- Strategy 2.5 Provide adequate indoor facilities to support active living programs, services, and lifestyles.
- Strategy 2.6 Provide adequate outdoor facilities to support active living programs, services, and lifestyles.
- Strategy 2.7 Continue to support the planning/implementation efforts of various groups/organizations for new/improved outdoor recreational facilities.



Needs Assessment: Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Connectivity/Mobility/ Access

Goal 3: Enhance walkability, bikability, and universal access throughout the community.

- Strategy 3.1 Provide safe, universal, and equitable access to parks and recreation facilities throughout the Town.
- Strategy 3.2 Expand efforts to enhance multi-use trails (bicycle/walking paths and trails) throughout the Town.



THANK YOU!



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